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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

While efforts continue to focus on attaining the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations system has also embarked on consultations aimed at defining the contours of the post-2015 development agenda. In that regard, the regional commissions have conducted widespread, multi-stakeholder consultations to identify critical elements to include in that agenda. Despite being linked to well-identified indicators of achievement, the monitoring framework of the Goals, did not take into account the fact that countries and regions are in different stages of development. As a result, global targets did not reflect relative performance or national and regional disparities. The post-2015 development framework should therefore be flexible enough for adaptation at the subnational, national and regional levels.

The regional consultations identified a number of common challenges with varied degrees of priority among the regions, including the need to address the major issues of inequality, human rights and good governance; sustainable consumption and production patterns; resilience to natural and man-made disasters; and the need for economic transformation and inclusive growth. More importantly, they also highlighted the criticality of the means of implementation the strategies and the enablers of development for a post-2015 agenda.

In addition to taking stock of the Millennium Development Goals and initiating consideration of the post-2015 development agenda, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly will be considering throughout 2013 the important issue of international migration and development. Multilateral dialogue and cooperation at the regional and subregional levels could be particularly beneficial to developing countries in that regard, given the existing and growing trends of South-South and intraregional migration.

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The present report is submitted to the Council in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1823 (XVII) and Council resolution 1817 (LV) and is structured in two main sections. The first provides an updated analysis of the lessons learned in implementing the Millennium Development Goals from the regional perspective; presents the critical messages emanating from the regional consultations held on the post-2015 development agenda as inputs to the global discussions; and highlights the important role of regional cooperation in maximizing the benefits and addressing the challenges of international migration and development. The second covers developments in selected areas of regional and interregional cooperation, including additional policy matters addressed during the ministerial sessions of the regional commissions; efforts to promote coherence at the regional level, including through the respective regional coordination mechanisms convened by the regional commissions, as mandated by the Council; cooperation with non-United Nations regional organizations to promote development; and ongoing interregional cooperation among the regional commissions through the production of joint analytical products, the hosting of joint events and the implementation of joint projects, as part of their efforts in promoting South-South cooperation.

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I. Regional perspectives on the global agenda

A. The Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda: lessons learned and messages from the regions

Background

1. Many countries, across all regions, have made tremendous progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals. At the global level, most of the Goals will be attained, and in some cases progress will go beyond the targets set in the 2000s. For example, the goal of halving the proportion of people living in poverty will be exceeded since the rate is expected to fall to 15 per cent by 2015, compared with the Millennium Development Goals target of 23 per cent. However, progress is uneven across and within countries and regions. The special event of the General Assembly to be held in September 2013 to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Goals will provide an opportunity to identify major gaps that exist and highlight the urgency of accelerating progress in countries that are not on track.

2. While efforts continue to focus on attaining the Goals, the United Nations system has also embarked on consultations aimed at defining the contours of the post-2015 development agenda. The Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda delivered its report at the end of May, and the Secretary-General will submit a follow-up report to the General Assembly prior to its special event in September. The Economic and Social will also take up discussions on the post-2015 development agenda during its high-level segment in July 2013. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, established by the Assembly in its decision 67/555, in accordance with the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in July 2012 (Rio+20 Conference),has also begun its work. In addition, a number of other consultations are being supported by the United Nations development system, Member States and academic institutions.

3. The regional commissions regularly report on progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals in their regions. The widespread, multi-stakeholder consultations they have conducted have served to identify critical elements to be included in the post-2015 development agenda and a number of common challenges affecting many parts of the developing world. However, the order of the priorities changes from region to region based on particular circumstances. The monitoring framework of the Goals, despite being linked to well-identified indicators of achievement, did not take into account the fact that countries and regions are in different stages of development. As a result, global targets did not reflect relative performance or national and regional disparities. The post-2015 development framework should therefore be flexible enough for adaptation at the national and regional levels.

4. The present report provides an updated analysis of the lessons learned in implementing the Goals from the regional perspective. It also presents the critical messages emanating from the regional consultations held on the post-2015 development agenda as inputs to the global discussions, which is available in a joint report by the regional commissions entitled "A regional perspective on the post-2015

United Nations development agenda".[1] The publication and outcomes of the regional consultations are available from the regional commission website: www.regionalcommission.org.

Prevailing situation in the different regions and results of the regional consultations

Economic Commission for Africa

5. Africa's recent economic performance has sparked renewed optimism about the continent's development prospects. The discourse has shifted from perceiving the challenges facing Africa as being overwhelming to seeing Africa as an emerging pole of growth. Over the past decade, economic growth has been consistently high and resilient to the global and financial economic crisis, only dipping for a couple of years following the onset of the crisis in 2007.

6. Between 2000 and 2009, 11 African countries grew at an annual rate of 7 per cent or more, which is considered sufficient to double the economy in 10 years. Despite the sovereign debt crisis in Europe and the subdued growth in North America and China, Africa's medium-term growth prospects remain strong, at 4.8 per cent in 2013 and 5.1 per cent in 2014. The business climate has also improved, and the middle class has expanded. In 2010, the middle class was estimated at 355 million people, or 34 per cent of the total population.

7. Although some social indicators have improved, such as progress in raising the primary school enrolment rate, gender parity in education, reduction in the prevalence and incidence rates of HIV/AIDS and improvements in governance indicators, Africa is unlikely overall to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals: Africa still has the highest maternal and child death rates; forest cover is declining rapidly; and access to improved water sources and sanitation is limited. Such trends raise legitimate questions about the quality and sustainability of Africa's growth trajectory.

8. Consultations led by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) with member States, civil society and a wide range of stakeholders have generated consensus around the following three broad development outcomes as priorities for the post-2105 development agenda: structural economic transformation and inclusive growth; innovation and technology transfer; and human development. Furthermore, the consultations have also highlighted the importance of development enablers in creating the appropriate environment for the realization of the three priority outcomes. The enablers include, but are not limited to, peace and security; domestic resource mobilization; infrastructure (including transport, telecommunications, water and energy); good governance; and an enabling global governance architecture, in particular with respect to international trade and finance.

Europe and Central Asia

9. The region covered by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) as a whole is characterized by high levels of economic and human development. However, the aggregate figures conceal large disparities between and within countries. Therefore, making economic growth more inclusive and sustainable, and adopting social protection systems and policies that reduce the social and economic divide is an imperative for all countries of the region.

[1] Available from http://www.regionalcommissions.org/?p=481.

10. In respect of the Millennium Development Goals, two groups of countries can be identified on the basis of the indicators. The first group consists of middle- and upper-middle-income countries that have eliminated extreme poverty to a large extent and are likely to attain most of the Goals. The group is dominated by the new European Union member States from Central Europe and European Union candidate countries from South-Eastern Europe. The second group mainly includes the lower-middle- and low-income countries from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus region and Central Asia, as well as the relatively less advanced transition economies of South-Eastern Europe. These countries experienced severe difficulties in the 1990s in their transitions to market economies and have therefore been less successful in achieving the Goals, although they made significant progress in the seven years before the global financial crisis of 2008.

11. The global economic and financial crisis of 2008-2009 has continued to have a strong negative effect in most countries of emerging Europe and Central Asia. Higher unemployment and lower incomes have forced households to economize even on necessities. Marginalized groups have been hit harder by unemployment, income losses and reduced accessibility to health services than has the majority of the population. Such groups include disadvantaged ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and migrants. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals could be accelerated at a minimal cost if the social and economic policies of Governments would focus on improving the living standards of those disadvantaged groups. Any future development agenda should also maintain this focus.

12. Consultations are ongoing in Europe on the post-2015 development agenda, and environmental considerations are emerging as a fundamental challenge. ECE organized a conference on the theme "Environment for Europe" in Kazakhstan in September 2011, which was the first pan-European initiative to start discussions on the necessary steps to facilitate the region's transition to a green economy. Countries will need to apply a mix of economic, legal and regulatory, voluntary and information-based instruments to foster the transition. Appropriate economic instruments will be needed to alter relative prices in order to change production and consumption patterns. There is no "one-size-fits-all" instrument mix that can facilitate the transition to a green economy. The actions taken by each country will be based on its initial socioeconomic and environmental conditions.

Latin America and the Caribbean

13. The past 10 years have seen positive trends in economic growth, job creation, and the reduction of extreme poverty and an improvement in the region's high-income distribution inequality. The economies of the region have also become more resilient to global shocks, as can be seen following the global economic and financial crisis, where the region's economies slowed in 2008 but returned to growth by 2009. The region has therefore made considerable progress towards reaching the targets of the Millennium Development Goals, including on reducing extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and infant mortality, and on improving access to safe drinking water. Over 90 per cent of the population has access to primary education, and gender parity has been achieved in education. However, gender gaps continue to exist in respect of income and access to property and decision-making.

14. In the Caribbean subregion, access to education is even broader, with near universal secondary education and much greater access to tertiary education.

Countries of the region have relatively stable democracies, with high levels of political participation and low and declining levels of political violence.

15. The region is very heterogeneous, comprising countries that are in the upper-middle income bracket and are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; small island developing States that have particular vulnerabilities; and heavily indebted poor countries. Such heterogeneity is also seen within countries since the region has the worst income distribution in the world. Addressing poverty eradication as well as the issue of income inequality will therefore remain a focus of the post 2015 period.

16. The region is host to some of the world's richest natural resources, in respect of rivers, forests and biodiversity, and its future development agenda will need to contain a strong environmental component. The region is extremely vulnerable to climate change, ranging from the El Niño phenomenon to the floods and hurricanes that particularly batter the Caribbean every season. New development pathways must be found as a matter of urgency to ensure environmental sustainability, establish an environmentally friendly economy and reverse ecological destruction. The global patterns of production and consumption must change to a more sustainable path. Management of the natural resource base of economic and social development is the overarching and essential requirement for sustainable development.

17. The means by which the post-2015 development agenda is implemented is of critical importance to the region. In this regard, development assistance, South-South and triangular cooperation, public spending and new ways of involving the private sector are key issues in the new development agenda. The reform of the international financial architecture is an important part of this, including making room for innovative sources of financing. From the perspective of the region, financing for sustainable development is a key tool in making the agenda a reality.

Asia and the Pacific

18. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in conjunction with the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a series of subregional workshops and consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, including for the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries, with Government representatives, experts and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. The Millennium Development Goals provided a powerful tool for consolidating national, regional and global efforts around clear, concise and measurable development objectives. However, progress towards the Goals varies among the countries of the region and across different goals and indicators. Important gaps remain in policies, strategies and, critically, the availability of resources, all of which need to be explicitly addressed in order to achieve the Goals.

19. The region as a whole has already reached the targets of reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than $1.25 per day and halving the proportion of people without safe drinking water. Progress has also been achieved in ensuring gender parity at the three educational levels; reversing the spread of HIV and tuberculosis; increasing the areas covered by forests and those with protected status; and reducing the consumption of ozone-depleting substances. Furthermore, the region is on track to ensure that all children attend primary school.

20. The regional consultations indicated that the post-2015 development agenda should build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, along with an explicit focus on addressing inequalities and disparities at all levels, including intergenerational inequality; fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth; building productive capacity; eradicating poverty; reducing hunger and malnutrition; reducing child and maternal mortality; ensuring access to sanitation and safe water and to modern sources of energy; combating non-communicable diseases; fostering gender equality and the empowerment of women; promoting youth employment and decent and productive employment for all; and reducing all forms of vulnerabilities.

21. The consultations also indicated that special attention should be paid to the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. In addition, they agreed that the post-2015 development agenda must address the different needs and aspirations of the States Members of the United Nations, as well as recognize the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation and the increased role of different stakeholders, such as civil society, the private sector, the media and centres of excellence.

22. There are four issues that are of high priority for conflict-affected States: inclusive economic growth that is pro-poor and pro-jobs; development that is supported by State effectiveness and State-building; the security of citizens and the concern that violence is created not only by war but also by the criminalization of many of these societies; and the issue of peace and justice based on human rights. A much more robust system of economic and social protection that takes into account the challenges and opportunities of changing demographics, such as the "youth bulge", is needed.

Arab States

23. In the Arab region, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) regularly analyses progress towards the targets of the Millennium Development Goals and provides policy advice where needed. It is remarkable to observe that a number of the countries affected by transitions in the region, namely, Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia, were among the top performers in achieving the Goals in the region. Evaluations of national progress towards the Goals did not take into account large inequalities within each country — whether between rich and poor, rural and urban or men and women. Thus there is a need to look beyond the national averages of the Millennium Development Goals indicators in order to better understand the situation on the ground.

24. The high-income countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council will attain most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, while the Arab least developed countries are largely not on track. The region as a whole is on track to meeting primary education targets, and the elimination of gender disparity in education has been attained at both the primary and secondary levels. However, women's empowerment remains a distant goal, and the levels of poverty, child malnutrition and population suffering from undernourishment remain high.

25. Regarding the post-2015 development agenda, it is important to address the need for political and governance reforms in the region. Ongoing transition in the region represents a call for broad-based political participation and access to decision-making processes by a large number of the populations, particularly youth and women. Institutional reforms are needed to create effective and accountable

systems that are responsive to popular demands and capable of providing efficient services. It is also necessary to redefine poverty measurements that address non-monetary factors in defining the multidimensional nature of poverty in order to better reflect national contexts.

26. Inequality within and between countries remains a major challenge. Therefore, the post-2015 development agenda must include measures for providing social protection that can raise the living conditions of the most vulnerable. Social protection reflects national concerns for fairness, dignity and the capabilities of citizens and safeguards the capabilities of the chronically deprived and those who may only need such support temporarily. At the same time, social protection can be a capability enabler for the disadvantaged since their capability can expand once their specific basic needs have been met.

27. Promoting regional cooperation and integration will help to overcome disparities in the levels of national development. Such cooperation could extend to the management of scarce natural resources, in particular water resources, to promote water and food security.

B. International migration and development: a critical role for regional cooperation

Background

28. The issue of international and regional migration has continued to grow in scope, complexity and impact since the General Assembly held its first high-level dialogue on international migration and development in 2006. Furthermore, since 2010, the issue of international migration has been at the core of many international debates concerning the global economic crisis and such related topics as the situation of migrants and remittance flows, the return of migrants, the anti-immigration climate and the increasing vulnerability of the human rights of migrants.

29. At the second high-level dialogue on international migration and development, to be held in New York in October 2013, the international community will have the opportunity to keeping migrants at the centre of the debate, while assessing formal progress and seeking new approaches to addressing international migration through cooperation and coordination at the local, national, regional and global levels, with the involvement of leading actors in migration, including civil society and mechanisms of regional integration.

30. Mitigating the challenges of international migration while maximizing its benefits to development, including as a driver for regional integration, has been an important goal for many countries across all regions. However, collaboration on and forging greater consensus on the means and policies to attain such a goal have yet to be fully achieved, including at the subregional and regional levels. Multilateral dialogue and cooperation at the regional and subregional levels could be particularly beneficial to developing countries, given the existing and growing trends of South-South and intraregional migration. While South-North migration remains the main driver of global migration, South-South migration has become almost as relevant: in 2010, about 73 million international migrants, who had been born in the South, were residing in the South; and about 74 million migrants originating in the South were living in the North. Different factors are responsible for this change, including the

new role of emerging economies, developments in transportation and infrastructure, and differentials in income, wages, job opportunities and labour markets in the countries of the same region.

International migration and regional specificity

31. International migration clearly exhibits regional specificities. In Africa, the great majority of international migration takes place within the continent itself, especially from neighbouring countries, largely determined by geographical location and membership in the regional economic communities. International migration in Latin America and the Caribbean is mainly extraregional, essentially to the United States of America and to Spain; only 14 per cent of all international migrants born in the region reside there. In the Asia-Pacific region, the predominant pattern is one of low-skilled temporary labour migration, including long-distance migration to the Gulf region and to the emerging economies of East and South-East Asia. Domestic work is the most important occupation for women migrants from Asia in the low-wage sector. Many economies of the Asia-Pacific region rely heavily on remittances from labour migration that amount to almost half the estimated remittances in the world. In the ESCWA region, migration is extremely intense. Over 54 per cent of the 17 million emigrants from ESCWA countries in 2010 were living in other ESCWA countries. Most of such temporary labour migration, which is dominated by single males, is directed towards the resource-rich countries covered by the Gulf Cooperation Council and Libya.[2] In 2010, of the 214 million international migrants worldwide, 50 million were living in North America and 70 million in Europe.

32. In addition to economic migration, new trends and migration dynamics have emerged related to conflict, climate change, environmental degradation and struggles over the use of such natural resources as water and food. For instance, the patterns of migration in Eastern and Central Africa are shaped by violent conflict, political instability and the high prevalence of poverty. In those regions, it is estimated there are about 10 million internally displaced persons, or 38 per cent of the world's total of such persons. At the end of 2011, the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan hosted over 1.2 million refugees combined, the majority of whom were from Iraq.[3] However, with the worsening situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the number of refugees in neighbouring countries, particularly Jordan and Lebanon, has recently reached 1 million.[4] The Asia-Pacific region has seen an increase in the interest of member States to engage in discussions on migration issues related to environmental change and natural disasters since it is the region most prone to such disasters.

Regional cooperation on international migration and the role of the regional commissions

33. In addition to being a driver of regional integration, with the most salient example being that of the European Union, regional cooperation on international migration and development has long preceded global cooperation, and in many instances has produced effective commitments and strategies, such as the

[2] Based on World Bank, *Migration and Remittances Factbook* 2011 (Washington, D.C., 2011), see table 1, Bilateral estimates of migrant stocks in 2010.

[3] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Global trends 2011: a year in crisis", pps. 12-14.

[4] Data available from http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2007) and the agreement on the establishment of the council of the leaders of migration agencies of the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (2007). The African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa (2006) also provides the guidelines and principles to assist Governments and regional economic commissions in the formulation of their own national and regional migration policies. In addition, inter-State forums for the development of a comprehensive framework to manage migration at the regional level, such as the Regional Consultative Process on the Management of Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origins in Asia (the Colombo Process) and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, demonstrate that the global principles of migration governance can be translated into concrete measures that are more readily applicable at the regional and subregional levels. The regional commissions have been supporting such processes and promoting regional cooperation on international migration, namely, by focusing their work around the four areas set out below.

Generating data and analytical products

34. The first area concerns developing evidence-based information and knowledge systems to improve the availability and quality of data and information. ECE developed "Migratory", an online inventory of sources on migration in Europe, Central Asia and North America and produced a manual entitled "Statistics on international migration: a practical guide", which offers theoretical and practical information and suggestions for various categories of producers and users. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) developed an inventory on migration sources in the Latin American and Caribbean region. ESCAP is working with the Scalabrini Migration Center in the Philippines to develop a migration information system in Asia for collecting, updating, reporting on and sharing international migration data in the region through a common web-based portal.

35. The regional commissions have also been undertaking analytical research. For instance, the ECA study on "International migration: trends and institutional frameworks from the African perspective" addressed intraregional movements, return migration, irregular migration, forced population movements and asylum-seeking, as well as temporary migration, skilled migration, remittance flows and the presence of diasporas in countries of destination. ECLAC produced a report entitled "International migration in Latin America and the Caribbean: new trends and approaches", which addressed emerging international migration issues and their implications in terms of policies and legal frameworks. The ESCWA report entitled "International migration and Development in the ESCWA region: challenges and opportunities", focused on the scale and impact of labour migration, remittances, brain drain and diaspora engagement in the region and looked at the legal framework under which migration took place. The ESCAP situation report on international migration in South and South-West Asia focused on the political, social and cultural dynamics that shape migration patterns in the subregion. Based on the recommendations of the report, a subregional policy strategy on international migration was formulated and transmitted to the member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

Capacity-building

36. The second area concerns building and increasing human and institutional capacities to design and implement policies on migration. In recent years, the regional commissions led a number of training and capacity-building workshops for Government officials, focused on themes related to the specific situations of the regions. For example, the workshops undertaken by ECE from 2010 to 2012 focused on building capacities in migration statistics in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The workshops undertaken by ESCWA focused on promoting regional dialogue. ECLAC focused on identifying new trends, issues and approaches, and ESCAP efforts focused on integrating migration in development strategies and planning. The capacity-building efforts provided, inter alia, an opportunity to introduce countries to key concepts concerning migration and development and to apply them to their own situations.

Promoting interregional cooperation

37. The third area in which regional commissions have increased their efforts is in the exchange of good practices, the sharing of information and facilitating dialogue beyond regional boundaries. Interregional concerns and best practices have been identified, from both South-South and South-North perspectives. For instance, a development account project to strengthen national capacities in dealing with international migration, led by ECLAC and implemented jointly by all the regional commissions, provided new analysis and built capacities at the interregional level, in particular through joint studies and workshops. Within the framework of the project, ESCAP and ESCWA joined efforts in 2011 to promote dialogue between their respective countries on international migration and development, while ECLAC, ECE and ECA brought together representatives from their regions to examine development, and the institutional and policy aspects of migration between Africa, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. The compilation of national and regional experiences and good practices has been published in an interregional report on labour migration and social protection and in a report on the development, institutional and policy aspects of international migration between Africa, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean". ECLAC has also supported the summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin America and the Caribbean States (CELAC) in their dialogue with the European Union on international migration between the two regions.

Support to global processes

38. The fourth area relates to supporting global processes. The regional commissions have also provided a regional perspective on international migration in such multilateral contexts as the high-level dialogue on international migration and development, the Global Forum for Migration and Development, and the Global Migration Group, the inter-agency mechanism on migration that comprises 15 United Nations entities and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

39. In support of the global discussion on migration and development, the regional commissions have contributed to the Global Forum for Migration and Development since its inception in 2007, through the collective support provided by the Global Migration Group and on an individual basis. For instance, in 2010 ESCAP, in collaboration with the Regional Coordination Mechanism thematic working group

on international migration, including human trafficking, organized the Asia-Pacific regional preparatory meeting for the Forum held in Manila.

40. For the first half of 2013, ESCAP, on behalf of the regional commissions, will be serving as the chair of the Global Migration Group. During its role as chair, it has focused its efforts on strengthening the institutional foundations of the Group and enhancing the role of the Group in promoting policy coherence and coordination among its member organizations in the lead-up to the 2013 high-level dialogue on international migration and development and for the subsequent implementation of its outcomes.

41. As part of the preparatory process to the 2013 high-level dialogue on international migration and development, the regional commissions have organized discussions to examine the regional aspects of international migration and development, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/219. The regional discussions that will be held between May and July 2013 will present an opportunity for countries to engage in fruitful discussions regarding practical recommendations and solutions to addressing the key migration issues and priorities in their respective regions and for building an effective and collaborative framework on international migration and development governance for their regions, including on how to integrate migration into the post-2015 development framework.

The way forward

42. At the second high-level dialogue on international migration and development to be held in October 2013, Member States will have before them the report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive overview of the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development. The report refers to elements that Member States may wish to take into account regarding the role of regional cooperation in addressing the challenges of international migration and development, including:

(a) Promoting investment in data collection, the documentation of best practices and the establishment of networks to share knowledge at the relevant regional levels;

(b) Developing regional migration frameworks that encourage coherent responses and cooperation between countries of origin and destination. Countries should develop appropriate national migration policies that reflect national concerns as well as regional interests and commitments;

(c) Enhancing interregional, regional and subregional coordination and cooperation on migration issues through, inter alia, the development of regional and subregional networks of stakeholders on migration issues;

(d) Assisting Governments and regional organizations to develop the capacities required to implement migration policies, strategies and frameworks at all levels;

(e) Encouraging the regional commissions to take the lead in tailoring the global migration and development agenda to fit the specificities of different regional contexts, and ensuring coherent and appropriate regional responses from the United Nations system to migration and development issues, including through hosting regional dialogues on migration and development-related issues, where relevant.

II. Developments in selected areas of regional and interregional cooperation

A. Major policy issues addressed by the regional commissions at their ministerial sessions and other high-level meetings

43. The regional commissions considered the issues highlighted in the first part of the present report at their high-level ministerial sessions and at other meetings held since the convening of the substantive session of 2012 of the Economic and Social Council. During the period under consideration, four of the regional commissions, namely, ECLAC, ECA, ECE and ESCAP, held their annual or biennial ministerial sessions.

44. The thirty-fourth session of ECLAC was held in San Salvador from 27 to 31 August 2012. The theme of the discussions focused on structural change for equality. Member States welcomed proposals by ECLAC for an integrated approach to development that would lead to transformation of the region's economies and foster a more inclusive growth. The outcome and resolutions of adopted by ECLAC at its session were considered by the Council in its resumed 2012 session. The outcomes and resolutions adopted by ECA, ECE and ESCAP at their respective sessions will be presented for the Council's consideration and action at its 2013 session through addenda to the present report.

45. The forty-sixth session of ECA was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 21 to 26 March 2013, as part of the sixth joint annual meetings of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance. The theme of the meeting was "Industrialization for an emerging Africa". The discussion addressed a number of related topics, including policies to accelerate industrialization and structural transformation in Africa as well as the planning and financing of industrial development. Member States discussed the need for a paradigm shift for Africa, from relying on the export of primary commodities to commodity-based industrialization, which would deliver employment, increase incomes and facilitate diversification. The ministerial policy statement adopted by the Conference stressed the need for effective policies and programmes by African countries to achieve that objective, capitalizing on the continent's resource endowments and high commodity prices, and addressing infrastructure constraints and bottlenecks. The session also considered and endorsed the new strategic orientation of ECA, as presented by the new Executive Secretary in response to the needs and priorities of African countries.

46. ECA organized the 8th African Development Forum in Addis Ababa in October 2012 on the theme "Governing and harnessing natural resources for Africa's development". The forum, jointly organized with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and other key partners, attracted over 800 representatives from the respective Governments, the private sector, academia, development partners and non-governmental organizations. The discussion brought into sharp focus the importance of natural resources governance in the social and economic transformation processes in Africa to foster growth and poverty reduction. The consensus statement adopted by the forum outlined actions and commitments that will see Africa gain more from its land, mineral, forestry and fishery resources.

47. ECE held its sixty-fifth session in Geneva, from 9 to 11 April 2013. The high-level debates were centred on follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 and the post-2015 development agenda, and on economic developments and challenges in the ECE region, particularly the role of innovation in creating a dynamic and competitive economy. Member States adopted the outcome document of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE, which defines the strategic priorities for the Commission's work for the coming years. Several proposals concerned strengthening the role of ECE, in particular regarding issues such as the creation of mechanisms to facilitate cross-border policy learning and the exchange of good practices on eco-innovation.

48. The sixty-ninth session of ESCAP was held in Bangkok from 25 April to 1 May 2013. The theme of the session was "Opportunities to build resilience to natural disasters and major economic crises". A ministerial round table on the topic discussed how to develop effective strategies and policies to build resilience to natural disasters and major economic crises in order to protect hard-earned development gains. The session called for a shift in the development paradigm in the region that would, in particular, require rethinking the way fiscal policy is designed and implemented, focusing more specifically on the creation of jobs and investing in the environment.

49. During the ministerial segment, the Secretary General's initiative Zero Hunger Challenge was launched at an event moderated by the Deputy Secretary-General who also chaired a ministerial panel on sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda. The panel highlighted country-specific experiences in formulating and implementing development strategies based on investing in human and natural capital as the drivers of inclusive and sustainable development that could provide valuable perspectives on the development agenda beyond 2015.

B. Coherence at the regional level

Developments relating to the Regional Coordination Mechanism

50. The regional commissions continued to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with relevant Council and General Assembly mandates through the respective Regional Coordination Mechanism of their regions in order to promote policy coherence and coordination among United Nations system organizations and with subregional and regional partners. The Deputy Secretary-General chaired the main Regional Coordination Mechanism meetings during the reporting period. The annual meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for the ECE region, held on 24 October 2012 in Geneva, brought together the regional directors of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in order to address issues of high priority on the United Nations development agenda that call for policy coherence at the regional level and require interagency cooperation. The meeting addressed ongoing global processes with regard to the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals. In addition, the meeting focused on follow-up to the Rio+20 Conference in the area of the green economy; possible areas of cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); and the need to reconsider traditional development assistance frameworks, tools and planning processes for middle-income countries in the region and to take the issue into account when developing

the post-2015 agenda. It was agreed at the meeting that a regional inter-agency report on post-2015 challenges and opportunities in the region would be presented to the General Assembly at its September 2013 high-level meeting on the Millennium Development Goals. ECE and UNDP, in close cooperation with the other agencies participating in the Regional Coordination Mechanism meetings, are coordinating the work involved in preparing that report.

51. ECA convened, in Addis Ababa on 14 and 15 November 2012, the thirteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism of United Nations agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development programme. The session was opened by the Deputy Secretary-General and deliberated upon principles and issues for consideration by African policymakers in developing the African position on the global post-2015 development agenda. The session took stock of some of the concrete achievements made during the past year under its framework, including the support provided by agencies of the United Nations system to 24 countries in developing national agriculture and food security investment plans based on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme; assistance in training African negotiators to negotiate the African position in the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference, "The Future We Want", and in preparing the Africa consensus statement, which was featured prominently in the outcome document, in the area of infrastructure; assistance in the preparation of the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity; and development of a gender-sensitive bioenergy framework and policy guidelines for Africa, which should promote local decent employment.

52. Considering that the session faced many challenges, in particular insufficient resources to implement and monitor cluster work programmes, the Mechanism recommended the development of a joint resource mobilization strategy and the creation of a trust fund to facilitate the implementation of activities and assist in building baseline data to measure progress on the achievements of the clusters. ECA has also continued to strengthen its subregional offices in order to enable them to promote Africa's regional integration agenda and to develop a framework for coordinating United Nations support in the delivery of the development programmes of the regional economic commissions. Subregional coordination mechanisms have been established in all ECA subregional offices, along with multiyear programmes of work for the integrated support of the United Nations system to the regional economic commissions.

53. The work of the Regional Coordination Mechanism convened by ESCAP in 2012, including through its annual session in December and 10 ad hoc meetings, focused on the articulation of Asia-Pacific perspectives on the post-2015 development agenda and on implementation of the decisions taken at the Rio+20 Conference. That work has resulted, inter alia, in: (a) agreement among ESCAP Mechanism members to develop a strategic framework for development cooperation in the region in conjunction with the United Nations Development Group for Asia and the Pacific; (b) the articulation of views of a large number of policymakers and stakeholders from across the region as input for the Asia-Pacific Millennium Development Goals 2012/13 report, jointly prepared by ESCAP, the Asian Development Bank and UNDP; and (c) enhancing the role of the Mechanism in knowledge-sharing, including by having the Mechanism website serve as a repository for the work of all United Nations entities in the region on Rio+20 and post-2015 development agenda-related processes.

54. In parallel, the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism continued to promote regional cooperation through its seven thematic working groups. The first joint Regional Coordination Mechanism/United Nations Development Group thematic working group on youth, established in 2012, consolidated the normative, policy and operational capacities of the United Nations system at the regional level into a single framework. Highlights of the work of the seven working groups include: (a) agreement on an inter-agency strategy for the improvement of gender statistics under the thematic working group on gender equality and the empowerment of women; (b) an inter-agency publication on green growth, resources and resilience and environmental sustainability in Asia and the Pacific; (c) a regional implementation plan for the global strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics; and (d) a situation report on international migration in South and South-West Asia.

55. The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Santiago on 24 January 2013. The agencies produced an inter-agency document for the Conference on Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Follow-up to the Development Agenda beyond 2015 and to Rio+20, held in Bogota from 7 to 9 March 2013. The document analysed the region's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, best practices in poverty reduction and the regional proposal for the development agenda beyond 2015. The Conference was preceded by a forum held on 5 and 6 March on the theme "Caribbean forum: shaping a sustainable development agenda to address the Caribbean reality in the twenty-first century", which discussed the challenges faced by Caribbean small island developing States and the need to address them in the post-2015 agenda.

56. ESCWA held its 18th Regional Coordination Mechanism in Beirut on 15 March 2013. The meeting was attended by senior officials of the League of Arab States and regional directors and representatives of the agencies of the United Nations system and other regional partners. Participants identified strategic priority areas for joint work between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in the economic, social and environmental clusters, including through the creation of a regional thematic working group on migration, co-chaired by the League of Arab States, IOM and ESCWA. The thematic working group aims to strengthen the impacts of the work carried out by member agencies by, inter alia, creating a forum for systematic information-sharing on activities, knowledge products and best practices on migration. The Regional Coordination Mechanism also offered the opportunity for participants to consult on ways to support preparations for the 2013 annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council, which will focus on the theme "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals", through the newly established thematic working group on the same subject. In addition, Regional Coordination Mechanism members had the opportunity to deliberate with civil society representatives on priorities for the post-2015 agenda.

Enhancing the effectiveness and coherence of Unite Nations system engagement with non-United Nations regional organizations to promote development

57. ESCWA continued to coordinate its activities with international and regional organizations, including the League of Arab States and its subsidiary bodies. The 17th meeting of the ESCWA Regional Coordination Mechanism, held in Beirut in December 2012, issued a general recommendation that confirmed the importance of enhancing coordination between the United Nations system and the League of Arab

States, with special support for the League's specialized Arab ministerial councils and a focus on capacity-building for the League and its specialized bodies. The most recent work undertaken as part of the long-lasting partnership and cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States consisted of joint preparations for the fourth Arab Millennium Development Goals report, expected by June 2013, and preparatory activities for the future establishment of a regional poverty mapping system for measuring poverty at the regional level and providing alternatives to address it.

58. The African Union Commission and ECA co-chair the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, and other organizations, such as the regional economic commissions, the African Development Bank and the planning and coordinating agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) actively participate in the activities of the Mechanism, as do such United Nations system organizations as the World Bank. The implementation of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union is a major activity of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and its clusters in support of African regional organizations. The joint programme entitled "United Nations system support to the African Union capacity-building programme: diagnosis and work programme of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa clusters" is organized around nine NEPAD clusters and subclusters, operating in the framework of the Mechanism for Africa. Although it focused on actions to be undertaken in 2012, which was the final year of the African Union Commission's strategic plan, it made provision for interventions beyond 2012 in support of the forthcoming 2013-2016 strategic plan of the African Union Commission. The capacity-building programme would be extended during 2013 to the other organs of the African Union, including the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, African Peer Review Mechanism, Pan African Parliament and the regional economic commissions.

59. ESCAP collaborates closely with subregional bodies such as ASEAN, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. A concrete recent example is the support provided by ESCAP to the preparation of the international conference on the post-2015 development agenda on the theme "Development for all: stop conflicts, develop States and eradicate poverty", held in Dili from 25 to 28 February 2013, with the fragile States comprising the Group of Seven Plus, the Pacific Institute of Public Policy and the Australian Agency for International Development. The conference ensured that the voices and priorities of fragile and conflict-affected States were heard at the fourth meeting of the high-level panel on the post-2015 development agenda held in Bali, Indonesia, from 25 to 28 March 2013.

60. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, ECLAC provides support to a number of regional organizations, including the Common Market of the South/ Mercado Común del Sur, the Latin American Integration Association, the Caribbean Community, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Central American Commission on Environment and Development, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Central American Integration System and the Andean Community. During the reporting period, for instance, ECLAC provided its intellectual and operative capacities to the fulfilment of the CELAC mandate, through support for holding the 2nd meeting of regional and subregional

integration mechanisms and bodies, held in Santiago on 8 November 2012. The conclusions reached at the meeting were submitted to the CELAC summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Santiago on 27 and 28 January 2013. In the context of cooperation with UNASUR, a study on the theme "Natural resources in UNASUR: status and trends for the regional development agenda" was also launched in May 2013.

61. ECE develops partnerships with non-United Nations regional and subregional organizations to support two major integration processes in the ECE region, one related to integration in the European Union and the other related to integration in the Eurasian Union. In particular, ECE has been providing technical support on the Instruments for Pre-accession Assistance to countries of South-Eastern Europe and on the European Neighbourhood Policy instrument in countries of Eastern Europe. ECE has been also supporting the Eurasian integration process, through a number of technical cooperation activities, in partnership with the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space. A memorandum of understanding between ECE and the Eurasian Economic Commission, a legal successor of the Commission of the Customs Union and a permanent regulatory body of the customs union and the Common Economic Space, is expected to be signed in the summer of 2013 to further enhance the cooperation.

C. Enhanced interregional cooperation among the regional commissions

62. Since the previous reporting period, the executive secretaries held three regular meetings to further strengthen coordination and collaboration among the regional commissions: in Turin, Italy, in September 2012, at the sidelines of the United Nations senior managers' retreat convened by the Secretary-General; in New York in November 2012, at the margins of the dialogues of the executive secretaries with the Second Committee of the General Assembly; and in Bangkok in May 2013, at the margins of the sixty-ninth session of ESCAP, hosted by the Executive Secretary, in her capacity as the rotational annual Coordinator of the regional commissions.

63. Some of the issues discussed by the executive secretaries as part of their agenda included the follow-up to the Rio+20 Conference, focusing on implementation at the regional level; regional perspectives and contributions towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals; review of actions at the global and regional levels regarding the post-2015 development agenda; the organization of an interregional high-level meeting on the theme "Beyond populism: economic challenges and opportunities in democratic transitions"; and such themes as "Follow-up to Rio+20: actions and considerations at the regional level", which was addressed as part of the high-level dialogue of the executive secretaries with the Second Committee. At the sixty-ninth session of ESCAP, at a round table on the rising global South and the prospects of interregional South-South cooperation for inclusive and sustainable development", the executive secretaries, inter alia, discussed emerging patterns of interregional South-South cooperation on issues related to trade, foreign direct investment flows between developing countries; financial cooperation; and development cooperation to influence global economic governance.

64. The high-level meeting on the theme "Beyond populism: economic challenges and opportunities in democratic transitions" was organized by ESCWA in Rabat on

5 and 6 February 2013 in partnership with the other regional commissions. Drawing upon experiences across the regions, the meeting focused on, inter alia, different options available to countries in their transition to democracy in order to address the current multiple challenges facing them and to launch inclusive growth; how external factors can affect democratic transition and the role of externals actors in undermining or supporting the political transition to democracy; and opportunities and obstacles to achieving a fully democratic Arab world and the role of regional cooperation and integration in that process. Co-organized by the Government of Morocco, the meeting was attended by a number of high-level Arab and international political leaders, policymakers and development practitioners with relevant experience in the fields of democratic transition and socioeconomic reform.

65. The joint report of the regional commissions entitled "A regional perspective on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda" was issued during the first half of 2013. The report offers an integrated approach to the formulation of priority options for a future global development agenda, by identifying key regional priority areas for a post-Millennium Development Goals agenda. It assesses the political and socioeconomic context in which the current Millennium Development Goals agenda was formulated and the challenges and opportunities it presented. One of the key messages contained in the report is that despite the many commonalities among the regions, their different circumstances call for a nuanced approach that addresses regional specificities.

66. To complement that reflection, the regional commissions are preparing a joint report on the theme "Sustainable development: advancing integration of its three pillars through regional action", to be issued in the second half of 2013. The report aims to ensure that regional perspectives and experiences are at the heart of global processes to advance the Rio+20 agenda. The report will define the regional implications of the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, and consider regional platforms for more inclusive development dialogues and action.

67. The annual meetings of the chiefs of programme planning of the regional commissions also continued to serve as a forum for sharing experiences and best practices on issues of mutual priorities and common concern. In addition, the regional commissions continued to partner in the implementation of a number of interregional development account projects, including those in the areas of trade, transport, sustainable development and social development.